

Return Of The Prodigal Sons

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attired in their immaculate costumes and white caps, a flutter of excitement flickered through the crowd, and just here occurred an incident showing the wisdom and foresight of the master of ceremonies, Mr. Flinchum, for suddenly it was reported that two men were dangerously ill. At once physicians and nurses rushed to the scene where it was learned that Dr. Morefield was critically sick, while Mr. Lon Sisk showed signs of collapsing, and two or three men were required to hold him up to prevent his fainting. Both of these men were affected by the heat, which was oppressive.

But it was soon reported to everybody's relief that the two patients were now resting comfortably, and everybody was delighted at this news except Mr. Nelson, whose ambulance needed exercise.

The Arrival

The clocks of Danbury were just striking 11:30 when a lookout caught the first sight of the approach of our conquering heroes, as the noble conveyance was crossing the bridge, Mr. Fagg looked like Ben Hur as he held the wheel, while P. C., Cooney, King, Woods, Alley, Nunn, Yarbro and Pepper stood at attention behind him.

But, lo! Behind and hooked to the green truck is a trailer on which is crowded the whole darned Dry Bunch of the Bishop's.

Couriers sent ahead explained the situation. There had been a reconciliation on leaving Chicago, and when Bob Reynolds procured the release of the green truck of the R. F. C., and sent it by freight just before he left for Russia to escape job hunters—the cup of our heroes' joy was filled to the brim.

As the noble green conveyance, loaded down to the bumpers with its distinguished freight, rounded the curve and hove into sight, the spontaneous outburst from thousands of throats crashed into the horizons like the thunder from a multitude of concealed batteries.

At this psychological moment, the band began to play, directed by the fine ear of Frank Hartman.

It was also at this psychological moment, that several cows which had been quietly grazing in lots nearby, suddenly raised their heads, walled their eyes, elevated their tails, broke their chains and hurled themselves away down the hills with the speed of the hurricane, pell-mell, panic-stricken, at the outlandish alarum which seemed to pervade the universe at this particular time.

Just at this moment a vague, indefinable pain seemed to rack through the nervous systems of the immense concourse of people, just like that premonition that comes before jumping toothache.

It appeared to the umpires of taste that something was wrong with the music.

The volume was certainly there. It seemed to reach the remotest outlines of the universe. Every piece was doing its part. Every player had tears standing in his eye socket, so great was the effort. But the rhythm seemed to be out of line, just like an automobile when it has been hit head-on by a truck.

A committee of experts was appointed quickly to investigate.

The report of the committee showed that whereas about half of the musicians were playing "Hail to the Chief," that the other half was blowing "Down On the Swanee River."

Finally, all the members of the band stopped playing except Mr. Hartman who, unconscious that his fellows had quit, continued to operate his alto trombone in a most discordant and deafening manner.

Officers were sent to wait on him and finally he reluctantly ceased, and order was restored.

The cavalcade now approached gaily singing: "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here."

Strong men broke down and cried at the thrilling joy of it, guns were pulled out and fired point blank at the ambient air, and roosters added their crows to the general pandemonium.

One of the first moves of the authorities was to put P. C. on his oath before he commenced tell-

ing about the sights he had witnessed. But before the magistrates could make him kiss the Bible he had jumped out and had a crowd around him while he was enlightening them of the wonders of Sally Rand, accompanying his narrative with sundry winks and gestures. Just then he looked over his shoulder and saw his wife among the auditors. He continued thus:

"You see, when we finally made a sally after we had run our truck in the garage, she ran away from us, being accustomed to travelling, from force of habit, so that we couldn't stop her. She was finally caught and jailed again."

The explanation while not entirely satisfactory to all parties concerned, seemed to get by temporarily.

Order of Parade

The parade was formed at the bridge under the immediate supervision of Mr. Flinchum, and in it was represented all the business, industrial, political and social groups of the city.

The procession was led by Nelson's combination hearse and ambulance, as Hence said this would be appropriate as indicating the solemnity of the occasion. It was loaded with a number of persons who had no cars and said they had just as well be dead anyhow.

Next came the Business Men's parade, in the lead of which rode Will White, quickly followed by Sam Riggs, Ebb Bennett and others. They bore huge banners which read as follows: "The Depression Will Now Be Over," "Business Will Pick Up," "Happy Days Are Here Again," etc.

Next and close at hand came the county officers afoot, as showing their humility to the voters. (In justice to them it may be said that none of them were in the hearse.)

Next came the oldest citizens of the city, in the forefront being Raleigh Young, T. S. Petree and others. They carried banners in their hands, some of which bore inscriptions such as "Remember 1876," "Never Say Die," etc.

Next came the ladies of the Fine Arts Club, walking. (The procession coming to a halt soon, messengers were sent back to learn the cause reported that one of the ladies had lost her vanity case and was hunting it.)

Next in order was Mody Bullen on his motorcycle, backfiring at every revolution.

Now came the magistrates and officers of the law. (P. C. got kind of offended here and said he didn't see why in the hell he wasn't put at the head of this crowd, until he was finally persuaded that he was one of the honored guests and should remain in the truck.)

Next in line was a large load of fodder which Hence explained was apropos, in that the feed-stuff was responsible more than anything else for Pid's staying away as long as he did, and it therefore should be honored. Everybody assented to this.

Finally, last came the green truck and its trailer, bearing their dignified and important freight.

The order of march was up Main Street to the mill and out Mill Street where it cut across and went up the hill by Sisk's store, and thence around the court house and up Main Street, finally reversing and travelling backwards to the court house square where a speaker's stand had been erected, and where the distinguished ceremonies of the day were to be pulled off.

Senator Sparger had been engaged as the speaker of the day.

Soon every seat in the square was packed with expectant and palpitating humanity.

Every ear was strained and every eye was stretched, to see and hear the details of the great cruise, with its stories of difficulties and danger, and its honors crowded upon the good name of the county.

The two delegations—the original Bunch and the Cannon crowd—were seated within a pale of honor and distinction, immediately in front of the speaker's stand.

Senator Sparger's Address.

The full text of Senator Sparger's address is as follows:

"Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen: (Tremendous applause.)

"(I will first request that the ladies remove their hats, and also their babies to a safe distance.)

"This occasion will go down in history as one of the world's most notable achievements, and

may be compared only with Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and with the return of Caesar's conquering hordes to Rome.

(At this moment two yellow dogs which had been bristling to each other, suddenly began to fight and caused a near panic in front of the speaker's stand — but Hence appearing with a stick, happily began to belabor the two boisterous canines, who sought safety in precipitate flight.)

During the brief interruption of Senator Sparger's address it was observed that several officers of the law including Constable Young, Deputy Mose Carroll and Constable Rufus Mabe were in close and excited conversation. It seems that a quick, keen report had been heard, something like the noise of a sharpshooter's fire or the explosion of a sniper's rifle. There was great but suppressed excitement, as it would not do to let the audience sense the sinister, unseen danger that impended. The officers held each his gun in his hand, looking grim. But all at once somebody came up and explained that the sound which had been heard was only the snapping of the Senator's thread of discourse.

After this explanation, everybody was reassured, and sat down, especially the officers. They went way back and sat down.

The Senator went on:

"My friends, this auspicious and, so to speak, this tremulous and tremendous occasion (cheers, and cries of Tell it, Tell it), I say this balmy day of September, Anno Domini 1933 (Prolonged applause), must stand inscribed in golden letters on the blazing banners of our civilization (tumultuous applause and sustained cheering, during which the speaker drinks another glass of water), imperishable, and imperishably, and generations yet unborn will thrill with ecstasy in the sheer contemplation of it, and our children and GRANDCHILDREN—"

(The last words of the speaker were interrupted by a commotion over in the audience, and a motioning of some bystanders to the speaker. Coming forward to meet the Senator, they whispered something in the Senator's ear. The Senator then raising his voice, explained that the interruption was occasioned by Tom Petree and Pinnix Bailey who had been touched by the import of the Senator's last words, and were weeping on each other's shoulder, as they realized they could probably never see their grandchildren, having grown too old.)

The Senator now proceeded, after he had taken another drink of water:

"Not since the memory of man in the remote periods of creation, has such an opportunity, such an accomplishment, such a VICTORY embellished the escutcheons of any freborn group of distinguished champions of—"

(We regret that at this moment the silver tones of the orator were submerged in a crescendo of either frightened or angry shrieks from a large number of corralled infants in a lot nearby, which necessitated the immediate presence of sundry mothers, who repaired hastily to the scene to the temporary distraction of the spell-bound audience. But finally quiet was restored, a merciful calm swept over the consciousness of the babies, and the speaker, after another glass of water, resumed:)

"As I said before, ladies and gentlemen, this is a time when the world must cast toward the sun-kissed hills of old Stokes county a glance of such bitter envy, of such consuming jealousy, of such rantankerous and rancid hate and malice in witnessing the scrapping of all known records of fortitude, of bravery, of heroism in the face of—"

It was just at this juncture that Hence appeared in the forefront of the great audience and with his big wide hat in one hand, with the other raised in a most dramatic gesture, he announced in stentorian tones:

"Dinner is Ready!"

Incidents Of The Day

Panic immediately seized the great audience. Everybody rushed to the tables which under the skilled direction of Hence, uttered a hoarse sound of pain at the weight which had been thrust upon them.

Just here a testimonial must be paid to the first act, consideration and appreciation of Cap Creakman. While he and P. C. led the attack of

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